A

SUPPLEMENT

TO THE

Biſhop of LONDON's Letter

TO THE

CLERGY and PEOPLE

OF

London and *Weſtminſter*,

On Occaſion of the late

EARTHQUAKES.

The Fourth Edition Revis'd and Corrected.

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BRITISH MUSEUM

TO THE

Clergy and Inhabitants

OF THE

Cities of *London* and *Weſtminſter*.

WHEN Heaven's out-ſtretched Arm ſeems ready to execute Judgment on us, for our national and perſonal Impieties, for our innumerable and great Provocations of the Almighty; it certainly becomes a Duty incumbent on all Perſons, to think of every Method that can have a probable Tendency to avert the Vengeance, and appeaſe the Wrath of our incenſed God.

The Letter from the Lord Biſhop of *London*, to the Clergy and People of *London* and *Weſtminſter*, on Occaſion of the late Earthquakes, demands all the Regard and Attention that can poſſibly be given to a moſt excellent Performance; and had his Lordſhip's Obſervations extended to ſome other Particulars, with reſpect both to our Vices and Duties, it would have rendered needleſs this Attempt, or any Additions by way of Supplement. But our Apprehenſions of Danger are ſuch, (and indeed ſuch Times are the moſt proper Seaſon, to impreſs on the Minds of Men any ſerious Senſe of Religion) that I preſume and hope theſe my Endeavours to ſupply any Omiſſions in his Lordſhip's admirable Letter, will not be imputed to Vanity and Preſumption; but to the ſole Motives inducing me to it, which are to ſtem, if poſſible, the Tide of Infidelity and Immorality; to excite in us *all* a juſt Apprehenſion of the Danger we are in by our Sins and Wickedneſs, that we may in Time ſeek the Lord,

and ſupplicate the Almighty, to pity and ſpare us his People, and to keep from us the Judgments we no leſs deſerve, than we dread; and fear he will execute upon us.

We have been for ſome Years afflicted with the Miſeries of War, and the yet greater Calamity of an Inteſtine, unnatural, and unprovoked Rebellion; our Cattle have been long ſorely ſmitten with a mortal Diſeaſe, that hath reſiſted all Remedies, and reduced many proſperous happy Families, to utter Ruin and Miſery; the ſcourge of Locuſts have, tho' but ſparingly, viſited our Land; and as the Almighty has more lately ſignified his high Diſpleaſure, by giving us repeated, tho' gentle Shocks of an Earthquake, in and near our Metropolis, and many other diſtant Parts of the Nation, have we not great Reaſon to ſuppoſe that theſe Judgments, thus ſucceeding each other, are ſo many Meſſengers ſent from God, to warn us, as he did *Pharaoh*, of other Afflictions perhaps yet more dreadful? It then highly concerns us duly to conſider, and ſeriouſly reflect on our preſent Situation, and minutely examine into our paſt Lives, in order to diſcover how we ſtand with our Creator, the great Governor of the World, and what we have done, thus to provoke the Almighty; that ſo from *God's Judgments which now* appear in *the Earth*, the *Inhabitants of the World may learn Righteouſneſs*, and that it may not be recorded of us, as it was of *Pharaoh*, *That we hardned our Hearts, and ſinned yet the more; that we will not depart from the Evil of our Ways, but deſpiſe both the Judgments and Mercies of God.*

That this may not be our Caſe, let theſe frequent Admonitions of our gracious God, have a due and proper Effect on us, ſo as to influence us to Repentance, and to *Sin no more, leſt a worſe thing come unto us; leſt we be viſited by the Lord of Hoſts with Thunder and with Earthquake, with Storm and Tempeſt, and the Flame of devouring Fire*, Iſaiah xxix. Let this Trembling of the Earth, which as yet has been gentle and no way

way noxious, alarm our Security, and awaken our Love and Thankfulneſs to God, for hitherto preſerving us; and if we will turn from our Wickedneſs, repent and amend our Lives, the Almighty of his infinite Mercy and Goodneſs, when he obſerves the Sincerity of our Contrition and Repentance, may be pleaſed to with-hold the fatal Blow, and prevent our final Deſtruction. But if we will longer *contend with him, who is Wiſe in Heart, and Mighty in Power; who removeth the Mountains, and overturneth them, in his Anger; who ſhaketh the Earth out of her Place, ſo that the Pillars thereof tremble*; Job ix. if we will perſevere in our Iniquities, and bid defiance to the Majeſty of Heaven, who can conſume us with the Breath of his Noſtrils; then may we fear, that *in our Days ſhall be Affliction, ſuch as was not from the Beginning of the Creation, unto this Time*; Mark xiii. then may he cauſe the Earth to open wide her Mouth, and ſwallow us up, by a ſwift Deſtruction.

The Reaſon why the ſevereſt and moſt awakening Judgments of God, prove ineffectual, to bring Sinners to true Repentance, ſeems to be, that we are apt to aſcribe all Calamities to ſecond Cauſes, and only lament them as natural Evils, without regarding the firſt Cauſe, which directs and governs the whole Courſe of Nature. Wars and Deſolations often ariſe from the Paſſions of Men; Famines are owing to Accidents of Wind and Weather; Plagues and Peſtilences are imagined to be Vapours and Steams of the Earth; and Earthquakes to be the Effect of certain Climates, or unſeaſonable Weather. Becauſe the Grounds of theſe Things appear in Nature, therefore weak and inconſiderate Men, impute it to that Cauſe, without regarding the God of Nature. "But Nature, as an excellent Writer obſerves, "is an empty Word, and the Courſe of Nature, is "merely an abſtract Notion or Expreſſion, of the Re- "gularity of his Operations, who created and governs "all Things. That the Sun runs its Courſe every "Day, is no leſs the Hand of God, than that it ſtood

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" ſtill one Day; nor is there any other Reaſon why " Men readily aſcribe ſupernatural Miracles to God, " when the Miracles of Nature, equally great, are " commonly thought to be done without him; but " only, that they weakly imagine what God does only " once, is done by him; but what he does always is " not to be conſidered as his Act." But both Scripture and Reaſon aſſure us, that as God *cauſes his Sun to riſe on the Evil and the Good, and ſends us Rain and fruitful Seaſons; that he maketh the Graſs to grow upon the Mountains, giving even to the Beaſt his Food; that not a Sparrow falls to the Ground, but the very Hairs of our Head are all numbered*; ſo he can *puniſh with the Peſtilence*, that *walketh in Darkneſs*, and *with the Sickneſs that deſtroyeth at Noon-Day*. He can ſcorch with Drought, or drown with Moiſture, or blaſt with Winds; in order to deſtroy with Famine, and make a *fruitful Land barren*. He can direct the Seaſons, both Winds and Weather, to fulfil his Will, or can reſtrain the Froſt and Snow, and permit natural Cauſes to produce Earthquakes, Thunders and Lightnings, as the ſure Executioners of his Decrees, when he intends to puniſh any Land for *the Wickedneſs of them that dwell therein*. By theſe various Methods does the God of Nature awaken and call Men to Repentance.——And if ever the Impieties of any Nation cried aloud to Heaven for Vengeance, ſurely we of this Kingdom have the greateſt Cauſe to tremble and be diſmayed; for even the Earth ſhakes to give us Warning of God's Anger, and his impending Judgments.

To enumerate and give a particular Detail of our Iniquities and Tranſgreſſions, is not ſo difficult as unpleaſant and diſagreeable; and yet totally to paſs them over in Silence, on ſuch a ſolemn Occaſion, would be really criminal and unpardonable. But where to begin, and when to end, is the moſt arduous Part of the Taſk.

I am ſorry then to obſerve, in the firſt Place, that our common Chriſtianity, nay, all manner of Religion, was never more profanely neglected and contemned,

temned, reviled and inſulted, than in this our Age. There are Men among us who ſet up Reaſon, and their own natural Notions, for their ſole Guide in matters of Religion; deſpiſing, and even ridiculing the Authority of the Scriptures, which God ſent his only Son from Heaven to reveal to us. The Revelation of God's Will, and the Redemption of the World by Jeſus Chriſt, as they are the higheſt Inſtances of divine Mercy, ſo all who reject and ſlight ſuch infinite Bleſſings, do juſtly deſerve, and ought in Reaſon to expect, the ſharpeſt Judgments and the ſevereſt Puniſhments: Nay, there are too many among us who even deny the God that made them. And as impious Principles naturally tend to immoral Practices, ſo when Religion falls under Contempt, and its great Author is diſowned and neglected, we are not to wonder if the moſt profane Oaths and horrid Imprecations do every where abound, and that this Crime is ſo flagrant and notorious among the Vulgar in our Cities and Towns: And it is to be feared, that Perſons of low Condition too often copy after their Maſters and Superiors, whoſe Education and better Senſe ſhould teach them greater Reverence to that God whoſe Providence hath diſtinguiſhed them from the Ignorant and Illiterate. Indeed, the Perſons moſt guilty of this ſhocking Crime, are ſo inſenſible of the Danger in thus provoking the Wrath of the Almighty, that they even call on him to inflict the moſt terrible Judgment of Damnation on themſelves and thoſe they converſe with. But ſo profane an Irreverence, ſo bold a Defiance of the divine Majeſty, and all that is ſacred, demands the pious Zeal of the Magiſtrate to puniſh, both in Vindication of God's Honour, and to avert the Judgments which ſuch Wretches ſo profuſely imprecate.

Beſides the lower Claſſes of Men, how many are there who have profeſſed before God and the World, upon the Faith of a Chriſtian, and as God ſhall be their Help, to bear Faith and true Allegiance to our preſent Sovereign, and to defend him to the

the utmoſt of their Power, who yet do all they can in favour of the Man they have abjured, in oppoſition to the Prince they have ſworn to defend. Surely ſuch Men have not the Fear of God before their Eyes, but ſeem to live without God and Chriſt, without Honour or Conſcience.

Another natural Conſequence of ſuch Indifference for Religion in ſome, and great Contempt of it in others, is the want of Probity and Integrity, in tranſacting the common Affairs of Life, in carrying on of Trade and Commerce. This is a Fact ſo notorious and evident, that every one knows the Truth of the Complaint; and yet where is the Individual that will firſt begin to amend *one?* In our Dealings with one another, what Arts are uſed, and even Lies invented, to over-reach, circumvent, and deceive; and what Pleaſure and Satisfaction will a Perſon guilty of ſuch Devices ſeem to expreſs, if he can, by theſe baſe and fraudulent Methods, obtain a ſmall, a meer trifling Profit or Advantage? In truth, Diſſimulation and Falſhood, Hypocriſy and Inſincerity, Craft and Cunning, do ſo abound among us, that Mens Words are ſcarce any Signification of their real Thoughts and Intentions. And thoſe who are of a too generous Temper, to practiſe ſuch Methods of Deceit and Tricking, are in Fact rediculed as Men of weak and imperfect Underſtandings.

An immoderate Love of irregular Pleaſure, is the diſtinguiſhing Character of the preſent Age; and as if meer Fornication was not a Sin ſufficiently wicked, we have Men of Taſte among us, who dare to purſue, if not to juſtify, even the open Violation of their Marriage-Vows. But how inconſiſtent Adultery is with a true ſocial Life, a matrimonial Friendſhip, and a natural Love of a genuine and unſuſpected Offſpring, but above all, with the Profeſſion of Chriſtianity, evidently appears even to the Tranſactors of ſuch Wickedneſs themſelves, whenever they are awakened by ſome ſtriking Incident, to a Sight of the Heinouſneſs of their Crimes: Then will the Agonies

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of a penitent Sorrow fill their Minds with real Miſery.

There is a Sin yet more deteſtable and unnatural, which has been tranſplanted from diſtant Climates to our more temperate Country, againſt which our moſt zealous Efforts ought to be exerted; a Sin, than which none can be a greater Contradiction to the declared Intention of the Author of Nature, to the divine Inſtitution of Marriage, and to the Command of God to *encreaſe* and *multiply* Mankind. This is a Sin ſo directly oppoſite to the Laws of God and Nature, and ſo highly provoking to him, that ſhould it continue to gain ground among us, we cannot but in reaſon expect the Judgments of an angry God will ſoon be inflicted on ſo wicked a Nation.

The Habit of drinking ſpirituous Liquors is arrived to that great Exceſs, eſpecially in the Metropolis of this Land, and round about it, that ſuch a deſtructive Practice muſt be of the moſt fatal Conſequence. The Body of the People will be ſo enfeebled by this Abuſe of ſtrong Liquors, without ſome ſpeedy Reformation, that our national Courage muſt be deſtroyed by the Diſorders and Weakneſs which this ſort of Exceſs introduces: And when the Paſſions are once inflamed thereby, it naturally produces profane curſing and ſwearing, Fighting, Robberies, Murders, Adulteries, Rapes, and the moſt enormous Crimes. It therefore deſerves our moſt ſerious Thoughts how to extirpate this encreaſing Vice from among us.

The Neglect and Profanation of the Sabbath, is become the Reproach and Scandal of the Nation. That God ſhould require from us only one Day in ſeven, for his more immediate Service, to be employed in public Worſhip, in devout Meditation and Prayer, in order to preſerve in the Minds of Men the Knowledge of the true God, and an habitual Senſe of their Duty to him; appears to be ſo juſt and reaſonable in itſelf, that it is amazing to think any ſhould be ſo abandoned, as to neglect and abuſe ſo excellent an Inſtitution; and yet how is this ſacred Day, for the generality, obſerved among us? What Numbers are

there who ſpend it in riding abroad, and taking Pleaſure in Lewdneſs and Wantonneſs, in Drunkenneſs and Debauchery, or in private Gaming! And of the few ſeen at our public Aſſemblies, how little may be diſcovered from the Behaviour of many, of any due Attention to the Word read or preached, of any ſincere Devotion in the Prayers they offer up! How indolent, careleſs, and indevout are *the many*, as if they came only to gaze about the Church, obſerve Dreſs and Faſhions, and enquire after News! ſuch ſeem to employ their time about theſe things, as if the formal coming to Church was ſufficient. But the hearing of the Word without practiſing it, will but encreaſe our Guilt, and God's Diſpleaſure.

It would be endleſs to mention all the particular Sins of this Nation, they are ſo many. The Cenſoriouſneſs, the uncharitable and unchriſtian Temper, that appears in the Writings of ſome againſt their Adverſaries, when diſcuſſing of Points that want clearing up, and on Subjects of the moſt ſerious and intereſting Nature, to the Shame and Reproach of our common Chriſtianity; the Licentiouſneſs of Plays and Maſquerades; the Connivance at, if not Protection of, innumerable infamous Houſes both for Lewdneſs and Gaming; the Corruption, falſe Swearing, and wicked Arts uſed at Elections; the Chicanery and unreaſonable Delays in Law-Proceedings, by means of which many Families are ruined and undone, only for endeavouring to recover their Right; the bad Examples of Perſons of high Rank, who frequently countenance the Breakers of thoſe Laws, they themſelves make, and which is worſe, and moſt unbecoming of Legiſlators, they are broke too often by themſelves; the infamous and obſcene Songs and Ballads that are openly ſung in our publick Streets, to the great Offence of all modeſt, virtuous Perſons who are paſſing by, to the great Corruption and Depravity of our Servants and Children, and to the total Diſcouragement of Virtue amongthe common People in general: And laſtly, as the Source of all, the fatal Neglect of both the private and pub-

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lick Duties of Religion, and of the Lord's Day; theſe are ſome, tho' alas! but a few, of the crying Sins of this Nation.

And having thus given a melancholy, but too true, Detail of ſome of the moſt notorious Vices that abound, and are encreaſing among us, and which have a direct Tendency to draw down the Judgments of Heaven; the natural Inference from what has been obſerved, is, for every one to contribute all he can towards a national and perſonal Reformation, by all prudent and reaſonable Methods, and particularly by a zealous Execution of the Laws againſt Profaneneſs and Immorality, that ſo we may hope to avert the impending Judgments of Heaven. For the Puniſhment of Vice, and promoting a Reformation of Manners, will be the moſt probable Expedient to diſarm the Vengeance of God, and prevent thoſe Calamities which our crying Sins moſt highly deſerve.

And if what has been repreſented contains a true State of our Caſe; if we are in this unhappy Situation, what ought we to apprehend from an offended God? What can we have to ſay for ourſelves? Is there a God that created us and all Things? A ſupreme Governor of the World, who hath declared his Will to Mankind, both by the Light of Nature and Revelation; and who hath enforced the Obſervance of his Laws, by the Promiſe of Life and Immortality to thoſe who obey them; and to puniſh, with eternal Miſery, thoſe who wilfully break and tranſgreſs them? If theſe Things are true, how can Men live without fearing, reverencing, and adoring this tremendous Being? Is it poſſible to ſuppoſe, that Men who daily profane the ſacred Name of God with impious and horrid Oaths, can really believe there is a God, who is jealous of his Honour, and will avenge ſuch Impiety? Is it poſſible to conceive, that Men who will lye, cheat, defraud, and deſtroy one another without the leaſt Remorſe or Uneaſineſs of Mind, can ſincerely believe the Truth of the Chriſtian Religion? Or can we think that Men who do in earneſt believe a Day will come, when they muſt give an Ac-

of their Actions, and be ſentenced to a State of Happineſs or Miſery for ever, will for the Sake of a few, unſatisfying, momentary Pleaſures, hazard their everlaſting Welfare? No, 'tis impoſſible; for whatever Pretences Men may uſe to deceive themſelves and others, Infidelity is at the Bottom of every wicked Man's Heart.

And the true Reaſon why ſo many who profeſs Chriſtianity, are remiſs and negligent in the Duties of Religion, is, becauſe they do not in earneſt believe the great Articles of our Faith. They profeſs themſelves Chriſtians, without conſidering what Chriſtianity is, ſo that it has little or no Influence on their Lives and Actions. Did Men ſtedfaſtly believe the Being and Providence of God; were they really convinced that the Chriſtian Religion is a Revelation of his Will; and fully perſwaded that a Day will come, when every Man ſhall receive Good or Evil, according to what he hath done in this Life: Did Men ſincerely believe theſe Things, it would be almoſt impoſſible that their Lives and Actions ſhould be ſo contrary to their Profeſſion. But then it muſt alſo be obſerved, that to believe ſlightly the Being of God, will not be ſufficient; for we muſt have proper Ideas of his Attributes, and conſider him as that ſupreme Being, who hath *meaſured the Waters in the Sea, and the Duſt of the Earth*; who hath weighed *the Mountains in Scales, and the Hills in a Ballance*; before whom *the Pillars of Heaven tremble*, and all Nations are as nothing: Nor will it be enough to believe in general the Providence of God, but we muſt imagine God to be always preſent, obſerving our Words and Actions, and knowing our Thoughts afar off: and the ſame as to a general Judgment, and a future State of Rewards and Puniſhments: We ought frequently to repreſent to ourſelves the Terror and Solemnity of that great Day: We ſhould alſo meditate on the Happineſs of thoſe who ſhall be admitted into Heaven, *there to reign with God for ever, to ſhine as the Brightneſs of the Firmament, and the Stars for ever and ever*;

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not forgetting to think on the Miſeries of thoſe unhappy Souls, who ſhall *be caſt into the Lake of Fire and Brimſtone, where the Worm dieth not, and the Fire is not quenched.*

Having thus repreſented the Apprehenſions we are at preſent under, and the great Reaſons we have to fear, that the ſevere Judgment we ſo much dread, may not be far from us; and that the Sins of the Nation, may be reaſonably aſſigned as Cauſes of God's inflicting the Puniſhment we are ſo apprehenſive of; what remains, but that by a ſincere and true Repentance of our Sins, we endeavour to appeaſe God's Wrath, that he may be gracious and merciful, and not execute his Judgments upon us.

The Neceſſity and Efficacy of true Repentance, the tender and compaſſionate Regard which the Author of our Being, hath to our Happineſs, are fully and movingly repreſented by the Prophet. *Repent, and turn your ſelves from all your Tranſgreſſions, ſo Iniquity ſhall not be your Ruin. Why will ye die? I have no Pleaſure in the Death of him that dieth, ſaith the Lord God; wherefore turn your ſelves and live.* Ezek. xviii. God is abundant in Mercy and Pity towards Mankind: But infinite Mercy itſelf will not ſave us from his Juſtice and Vengeance, unleſs we perform the Conditions on which he will be merciful. Tho' he hath aſſured us that *his Compaſſions fail not*, yet we cannot ſuppoſe he will extend them to Perſons who are not proper Objects of them. As Diſobedience is the ſure way to forfeit his Favour, ſo ſincere Repentance is the only Method to regain it.

He whoſe Hand directs thoſe Judgments we are now afraid of, is diſtinctly obſerving, how ſerious or ſuperficial we are in our Repentance, to prevent the Execution of them, and poſſibly our Fate may be determined by our Behaviour.

It is not the mournful Voice, the dejected Looks, but the true and deep Contrition of our Hearts, that can avert the impending Judgments of God. It is left

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to our Choice, as we are free Agents, whether we will abandon our Sins, or our Safety; whether we will be *Veſſels of Wrath*, or *Veſſels of Mercy*; whether we will be preſerved or deſtroyed by the Almighty. How particular then ſhould we be, in recollecting, how earneſt in bewailing and deteſting, the Sins and Follies of our own Lives, and thoſe of the Nation? But if after all our Humiliation and Repentance, the wordly-minded ſhould relapſe into their eager Love and Purſuits of *this World*; if the Drunkard and Glutton ſhould return to his Intemperance and Exceſs; the Impure into his Debauchery and Lewdneſs; the Proud to his wonted high Eſtem of himſelf and Neglect of others; the Paſſionate to their uſual Indulgence of Anger and Reſentment; the Negligent in the Duties of Religion, to their former Remiſſneſs; the Hypocrite to his old Practice of Diſſimulation; the falſe and common Swearer to his Perjury, Oaths, and bitter Imprecations; the Factious and Prejudiced, to the Spirit of Party and Diviſion; the Uncharitable and Unmerciful, to his cuſtomary unchriſtian, ſevere Reflections on his Opponent, or to an impious Diſregard of the Miſeries of his Brethren; if in theſe or any ſuch Inſtances of Iniquity it ſhould be found, that after our Faſtings and Humiliations, Sighs and Tears, Vows and Reſolutions, we are the ſame Men as before; we may then aſſure our ſelves, that we ſhall be ſtill obnoxious to the divine Vengeance, and muſt begin our Repentance again, for nothing can render God propitious to us, but the faithful Diſcharge of our Duty to him. And to render uſeful what has been offered, let every one examine himſelf how far he is concerned in the publick Guilt, that ſo all may repent of their own particular Sins; which will be the beſt Application of what has been ſuggeſted, and to aſſiſt them therein, I ſhall beg leave to recommend the following Hints.

Would we endeavour to appeaſe the Wrath of Heaven, prevent his viſiting us for our Iniquities, and remove his Judgments from us; let us ſeriouſly and

ſincerely

ſincerely turn unto the Lord, bewail our Sins and Offences, and with Prayers unfeigned, heartily and humbly beſeech him to have Mercy upon us, to forgive our Tranſgreſſions, and to ſave us from the Deſtruction and Deſolation of Earthquakes, and all other Calamities.

And if we deſire in earneſt to be reconciled to our God, that he may be propitious to us; let us all, from the higheſt to the loweſt, examine our own Hearts, and Root out every evil Thing that is offenſive, and an Abomination to Him. Kings, Princes, the Nobles and Mighty on the Earth, the Rich and Powerful, are all the Work of God's Hands, endued with immortal Spirits, ſubject to Death like other Men, and muſt give an Account one Day, how they have uſed their ſuperior Talents; as well as the Peaſant, the Poor and Ignoble; and Sentence will then paſs on them without regarding their Rank and Power on Earth. It will be then enquired, how Princes have governed the People committed to their Care, and if they have been a Terror to Evil-doers, and a Praiſe to them who do well upon Earth. How the Mighty have exerciſed their Power; how the Rich have diſtributed to the Poor, and if they have been Examples to others, of Juſtice, Goodneſs and Mercy; of Temperance, Sobriety, and Chaſtity; and of all the Virtues that adorn the Chriſtian Life: That *their Light* may *ſo ſhine before Men*, that others *ſeeing their good Works, may glorify our Father who is in Heaven.* There is a powerful Influence in Example; for Prayer, Preaching, and other divine Inſtitutions, are but the Means of Religion; but Practice is the End of all, and God appointed the one in Order to obtain the other. And ſince the Author of Religion, is alſo the Governor of the World, it muſt be reaſonable and juſt to expect, that *he will rule* thoſe *Nations with a Rod of Iron*, who obſtinately refuſe to do the Things which he expreſly commands. God's Diſpleaſure is highly provoked, by all open Inſtances of perverſe Unbelief, however artful

artful the Arguments offered to ſupport it, may appear to be. God judgeth Men by the inward State of their Minds, and not only by their outward Actions and Profeſſions; and therefore thoſe who for ſome *temporal* Conſiderations, will not declare themſelves againſt Infidelity, or Immorality, do in ſome Meaſure become guilty of thoſe Sins; for as our Saviour ſays, *he that is not with me, is againſt me.* They who ſit in high Places, unconcerned upon ſuch Occaſions, may perhaps think their Silence a ſafe and prudent Conduct; but let ſuch conſider what our bleſſed Lord obſerved; *whoſoever ſhall be aſhamed of me and of my Words,* in this *adulterous and ſinful Generation, of him alſo ſhall the Son of Man be aſhamed, when he cometh in the Glory of his Father, with the holy Angels.* It is high time to be affected with a due Senſe of theſe Things, when we are in manifeſt Danger of ſuffering the heavieſt Judgments, for our Unbelief, Luxury, and Senſuality.

They therefore are the beſt Patriots, the trueſt Lovers of their King and Country, who join an hearty Zeal for the Honour of God, the Intereſts of Religion, and a real Reformation of Manners, to their own political Schemes; the very beſt of which without this, will not be ſufficient to ſkreen us from the divine Judgments, or ſtay his Hand: when we conſider with the Pſalmiſt, that *Men* of *low Degree are Vanity,* and *Men of high Degree are a Lye:* when, as the former are too often ignorant of their Duty, or tempted by Poverty, to *ſteal and take the Name of God in Vain*; ſo the latter have too generally, tho' I hope not altogether been as the Prophet ſays, *an Aſſembly of treacherous Men; who are not valiant for the Truth upon Earth,* for *they proceed from Evil to Evil, and they know not me, ſaith the Lord*; but *every Brother will utterly ſupplant; and they will deceive every one his Neighbour, and not ſpeak the Truth; they have taught their Tongues to ſpeak Lies,* and weary *themſelves to commit Iniquity. One ſpeaketh peaceably to his Neighbour, with his Mouth, but in his Heart*

Heart he layeth in wait for him. Shall I not viſit them for theſe Things, ſaith the Lord; ſhall not my Soul be avenged on ſuch a Nation as this? Jerem. ix.

And it may be juſtly inſiſted upon, as one of thoſe many Sins, which every one ought to bewail and lament, the great Partiality, the unchriſtian Temper, and Prejudices which appear, in the Writings and Conduct of ſome, with Reſpect to the Treatment of others, even in Matters of a religious Concern. It can neither be concealed nor excuſed, that ſome Men are ſo abandoned to Bigotry and Prejudice, as to bring into diſeſteem, through want of Charity, the very Principles of Chriſtianity. It looks as if ſuch Perſons were in purſuit of ſome other Point, beſides that Truth, they would be thought to enquire after. How often do we ſee many excellent Attempts tending to promote the Knowledge of religious Truths, to advance the Honour and Glory of God, and the Practice of true Religion, fruſtrated and rendered abortive, through Prejudice, Obſtinacy and Prepoſſeſſion; and the Labours of ſuch ſtigmatized with the worſt Epithets; their laudable Endeavours repreſented as Wicked and Unchriſtian; and their very Perſons deſpiſed and contemned. This is ſuch conſummate Iniquity, and diſcovers a Mind ſo void of the Principles of the Goſpel, that nothing but infinite Mercy can waſh off the Stains of ſuch tranſcendent Guilt. Let thoſe ever give up their Pretenſions to *juſt Thinking*, as well as to *all Religion*, who will not ſuffer others to differ from them, without villifying and abuſing them. It cannot be for the Honour of any Church or Religion, to have ſuch ſort of Perſons, Members thereof.

The Profanation of God's holy Name, including Perjury, common Oaths, and every Expreſſion which derogates from the Majeſty of the great God of Heaven and Earth; and the Abuſe alſo of Places and Times dedicated to his more immediate Service, are ſuch Offences, as will incur his Diſpleaſure, and therefore are proper Objects of our Sorrow and

Deteſtation. In the following Words of the Prophet, we may learn our Duty and our Danger, in the Violation of the Sabbath, which is as ſinful under the Chriſtian, as it was under the Moſaical Diſpenſation, viz. *I contended with the Nobles of* Judah, *and ſaid unto them, what evil Thing is this, that ye do, and prophane the Sabbath-Day? did not your Fathers thus, and did not our God bring all this Evil upon us, and upon this City? yet ye bring more Wrath upon* Iſrael, *by profaning the Sabbath.* Nehem. xiii. Theſe Words ſhould be maturely conſidered, by all who profane the Lord's Day, and neglect the public Worſhip. The Obligations to ſerve God in public on this Day, are equally incumbent upon the Learned, and Unlearned, *High and Low*, Rich and Poor, who are particularly cautioned againſt the Sin of *forſaking the Aſſembling themſelves together, as the Manner of ſome is*; for all ſuch Perſons, however they may think to excuſe themſelves, are highly criminal, and greatly increaſe the Guilt and Danger of the Nation.

The great Neglect of Family-worſhip is what more immediately concerns our ſerious Regard and Conſideration, a Duty ſtrangely forgot and omitted in moſt Families, tho' never more neceſſary than in this looſe and degenerate Age; and the Neglect of which alone is ſufficient to bring down God's Judgments upon us. For the Conſequences of neglecting this important Service may prove fatal to the Public as well as to Individuals. As to the former, Families may be conſidered as the firſt Seminaries of Religion; and if the Heads of them are not careful to prepare Perſons for receiving public Inſtruction, we have not much to hope from them afterwards; for if no Care is taken of our Servants at home, and of our Children in their younger Years, when they are moſt ſuſceptible of religious Impreſſions, how can we expect that they ſhould be much profited by what they hear or learn at Church, or ſhould ever come to any Good? and by this Omiſſion of ours, they may be rendered almoſt neceſſarily bad in all Relations; undutiful Children, ſlothful and diſ-

diſhoneſt Servants; ſcandalous Members of any Church; uſeleſs to the Commonwealth; diſobedient to Governors; and in general, Burdens of the Earth, and the Plagues of human Society. This Evil if not ſoon remedied, will continually grow worſe, and diffuſe itſelf farther in every Age; till Impiety, Infidelity and Profaneneſs fill this Land with Iniquity, and make us ripe for Deſtruction; and tho' we may not be deſtroyed by a Flood, yet Earthquakes may ſwallow us up, without allowing us Time to ſay, *Lord have Mercy upon us.*

The Neglect of Family Duties, will alſo be of bad Conſequence to ourſelves, even as to the Things of this World: For what Security can we have of the Duty and Fidelity of our Children and Servants, if they have no Senſe of Religion, no Fear of God before their Eyes? If we have not been careful to inſtruct them in their Duty to God, there is no Reaſon to expect they will make any Conſcience of their Duty to us; and not only ſo, but all the Evil they afterwards commit, may in a great meaſure be imputed to us, in the great Day of Judgment. The Thought of this ſhould make us tremble, tho' that Time be more diſtant from us, than perhaps any Earthquake may be. Let us then for theſe and many other Reaſons that might be urged, reſolve with *Joſhua*, that *we and our Houſe will ſerve the Lord*, and do all in our Power by a future Care, to repair the former Neglects of this Duty; and were Children religiouſly educated, and Families regularly governed, what a happy Place would this World be, even a Paradiſe on Earth, in Compariſon of what it is!

The vaſt and amazing Increaſe of Popery, is another Abomination of this Land, and cries aloud for Vengeance. This Syſtem of Politics, founded on Cruelty and Inhumanity, (for it deſerves not the Title of Religion) requires all our Care to prevent its Progreſs among us. For if Idolatry, be a moſt heinous Sin; and if worſhipping Bread and Wine as God, be Idolatry; good God, how *full is our Land of Idols*, who *worſhip the Work of their own Hands, that which their own*

Fingers have made. Iſa. ii. 8. To make a God of a Wafer, or Bit of Bread, and to pardon Sins, what are theſe but Acts Divine? and as the Prieſts of the Church of *Rome* aſſume this Power, is not this making Gods of themſelves, and rank Idolatry? and will not the Lord who is jealous of any Rival, judge for theſe Iniquities? Let us on this Occaſion ſeriouſly conſider theſe Words of the Prophet, *Then ſaid I unto them, caſt ye away every Man the Abominations of his Eyes, and defile not yourſelves with the Idols of* Egypt; *I am the Lord your God. But they rebelled, and would not hearken unto me; they did not every Man caſt away the Abominations of their Eyes, neither did they forſake the Idol of* Egypt: *Then ſaid I, I will pour out my Fury upon them, to accompliſh my Anger againſt them, in the midſt of the Land,* Ezek. xx. And ought not ſuch Idolatries to be rooted out from among us?

How great Reaſon then hath a Nation to be earneſt in deprecating the impending Judgments of God, when Idolatry and Infidelity, Immorality and Profaneneſs, do ſo abound; when Things ſacred, the poſitive Ordinances and Inſtitutions of God, are neglected and deſpiſed? And as to the great Careleſſneſs or Neglect of putting human Laws in Execution, for ſuppreſſing of Vice, and for the better Encouragement of Virtue, whereſoever this Fault lies, whether in the higheſt or loweſt Magiſtrate, the ſame is exceedingly blameable and ſinful. Far be it from me to derogate from the Dignity or Authority of Magiſtracy, by expoſing or deſcribing any of thoſe veſted with it, who offend therein; however, it cannot be improper to obſerve, that as Laws made to encourage Virtue, and reſtrain Vice, are a Bleſſing to a Nation, ſo the Neglect of putting them in Execution, is the Curſe of it. Let this ſink deep into the Minds of thoſe, who are poſſeſſed of ſufficient Power, and yet neglect the proper Application and Exerciſe of it; in not ſecuring God's Honour againſt all open Attacks; in not ſuppreſſing that Drunkenneſs, thoſe Violations of the Sabbath, thoſe Execrations and various Inſtances of Profaneneſs, Irreligion,

ligion, and other Enormities which pollute our Land, and expoſe it to the fierce Anger of God. Let them in due time conſider how they would bear the Thoughts of having contributed to the ſpeedy Deſtruction that may come upon us, thro' thoſe Vices, which had they properly diſcharged their Duty, might have been diſcouraged and ſuppreſſed. Theſe Neglects we ought to bewail, as well as to pray, that they may, for the future, better perform the Obligations they are under, *to execute Juſtice and to maintain Truth.*

And beſides confeſſing, lamenting, and bewailing our paſt Sins, in hopes of reconciling ourſelves to our incenſed God, let us alſo reſolve to perform ſuch Duties, as may enable us to lead a holy Life for the future; that ſo by our true Repentance, and ſincere Reſolutions to pleaſe God, the Remainder of our Days, he may be gracious unto us, and in *the Midſt of Judgment remember Mercy.*

And *Firſt*, if we ſeriouſly intend to lead a religious Life, we muſt endeavour to preſerve in our Minds a lively Senſe of God's continual Preſence. To repreſent frequently to our Thoughts, how near we always are to an all-ſeeing Almighty God; from whoſe Eye nothing can be hid, who is about our *Path and about our Bed, and ſpieth out all our Ways.* And would we conſtantly have in Remembrance, that we are ever in the Preſence of him, who is *of purer Eyes than to behold Iniquity*, who cannot look upon the leaſt Evil without Abhorrence and Deteſtation, and who will by *no means clear the Guilty*; this would have a mighty Influence on us, to render us modeſt and humble, juſt and temperate, pure and chaſte.

A *Second* Duty, which will be very inſtrumental towards our leading a holy Life, is to be conſtant in our Addreſſes to Heaven. Prayer is not only a Duty, as being Part of that Worſhip which we owe to God, as the great Creator, Preſerver, and Sovereign Lord of us, and all the World; but it is our Intereſt too. It is the Means which God hath appointed for the Conveyance of all his Bleſſings and Favours to us; and without

without praying for them, we have no Reaſon to expect that God will confer them: And if we deſire to be truly good, and to cheriſh in our Souls a conſtant Diſpoſition to this holy Duty, we muſt never omit our Addreſſes to Heaven, without ſome very urgent Neceſſity, Morning and Evening, both privately in our Cloſets, and more openly in our Families; and take all Opportunities to be as frequent as we can in our Attendance upon the public Worſhip. We ſhall find ourſelves bettered by this Practice; we ſhall feel the Comfort of it in our Minds; and experience from it the Bleſſing of God upon ourſelves, our Families, our Friends, and upon whatever we take in hand.

Thirdly, let us be frequent in receiving the holy Sacrament. This is a Duty too much neglected by moſt People; and yet it is an excellent Means to enable us to ſubdue our Sins, and to grow daily in Virtue and Goodneſs. For what can affect us with a deeper Senſe of the heinous Nature and Guilt of Sin, or more powerfully prevail on us to repent and forſake it, than the Remembrance that it cauſed the Son of God to diveſt himſelf of his divine Glory, which he had with God, before the World was; and to humble himſelf in our Nature, and die an ignominious Death on the Croſs, to make Atonement for our Sins? What can more ſtrongly engage our Gratitude and Thankfulneſs to God and our bleſſed Saviour, than the continual Memorial of ſo ſublime a Benefit? What can give greater Aſſurance to our Faith, that God will be merciful to us, than the frequent receiving the ſacramental Elements, which are the Signs and Seals of that Covenant wherein God hath promiſed to *forgive our Unrighteouſneſs, to remember our Sins and Iniquities no more?* Heb. viii. 12. Let then all who profeſs themſelves Chriſtians, make a due Preparation for this ſacred Ritual, and frequently partake of it, according to the true Intent of our Saviour's Inſtitution.

Fourthly, Let us duly and religiouſly obſerve the Lord's Day, which ought to be employed in the Exerciſes of Piety and Devotion; particularly in the public

public Worſhip of God, where our Children and Servants ſhould diligently and devoutly attend: And after it is ended, we ſhould chiefly ſpend the Day in reading the Scriptures, and other good Books; in Meditation and Devotion. It is of great Conſequence towards preſerving a Senſe of Religion among Mankind, that this Day be religiouſly appropriated to the Exerciſes of Piety. If Parents and Heads of Families are ſincerely deſirous that their Children and Servants ſhould become truly virtuous and religious, they ſhould not only allow Time and Opportunity, but ſtrictly oblige them to retire every Day, particularly the Lord's Day, Morning and Evening, to pray to God for the Forgiveneſs of their Sins, and for his Mercy and Bleſſing upon them.

If what is here propoſed and recommended to the Conſideration and Regard of all Perſons, really deſerves our ſerious Attention, it is of little Moment whether the Author be of the Clergy or Laity. He preſumes and hopes his Intention to do what Good he can, will not diſpleaſe or offend either; ſince it is a commendable Emulation in both, to ſtrive who can moſt contribute to awaken the diſſolute and hardened Sinner out of his Slumber; to recommend the Belief and Knowledge of true Religion, to the Eſteem and Practice of all Men.

And if we then ſincerely reſolve to break off our Sins by Repentance, and to amend our Lives by the Practice of the ſeveral Duties before recommended; if we *will do Juſtice, love Mercy, and walk humbly with our God*; we may reaſonably preſume and hope, that God will graciouſly accept of theſe our humble Endeavours to appeaſe his Wrath, and remove from us the calamitous Judgments, we ſo much dread and fear. *For to the Lord our God, belong Mercy and Forgiveneſs, tho' we have rebelled againſt him; neither have we obeyed his Voice, to walk in his Laws which he ſet before us. But if the wicked Man will turn from all his Sins that he hath committed, and do that which is lawful and right, he ſhall ſurely live, he ſhall not die;*

the

the Tranſgreſſions that he hath committed, ſhall not b mentioned unto him; for the Righteouſneſs that he hath done, he ſhall live. Let us then, *all turn unto the Lord our God, for he is gracious and merciful, ſlow to Anger, and of great Kindneſs.* Let every one of us ſay, *I will ariſe and go to my Father, and will ſay unto him, Father, I have ſinned againſt Heaven, and before thee, and am no more worthy to be called thy Son. Enter not into Judgment with thy Servants, O Lord, for in thy Sight ſhall no Man living be juſtified.* Let us *proclaim and ſanctify a Faſt, call a ſolemn Aſſembly, gather the People; let the Prieſts, the Miniſters of the Lord, ſay, Spare thy People, O Lord, and give not thine Heritage to reproach, remember us, and ſpare us, O God, according to the Greatneſs of thy Mercy.* And may the merciful God, accept of this our Humiliation and Repentance, thro' the Mediation of Jeſus Chriſt, our bleſſed Lord and Saviour. *Amen.*

FINIS.

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